

WSDOT I-5 Seattle & Shoreline Construction

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WSDOT concludes that retrofitting the viaduct is not a viable option

WSDOT concluded that replacing the [Alaskan Way Viaduct](#) is the most responsible investment of taxpayer dollars after reviewing a proposal from an independent engineering firm, T.Y. Lin International, to retrofit the viaduct. [The report](#) revealed that retrofitting the viaduct to a reasonable standard of seismic safety would cost \$2.3 billion, almost as much as a brand new elevated structure and without bringing the added benefits or overall lifespan of a new facility.

T.Y. Lin's report outlines what would be necessary to meet the retrofit standard necessary to adequately protect the existing viaduct from an earthquake. For an earthquake of serious severity, likely to have a one in 10 chance of occurring in the next 50 years, the standard would require that the viaduct, though it might be damaged, would still be usable after repairs. For an even more severe earthquake, expected to have a one in 50 chance of occurring in the next 50 years, the standard would require that the viaduct would not collapse in this type of earthquake even though it might suffer serious damage that would require major repair or even full replacement.

WSDOT estimates that retrofitting the structure to these standards would cost \$2.3 billion. A retrofitted viaduct would have an anticipated life span of 25 years, while a new structure will last 75 to 100 years. While a retrofitted structure helps with seismic improvements, the seawall replacement would still require construction disruption along the waterfront and the retrofitted structure would not have the safety improvements such as wider lanes and shoulders. The traffic disruptions during construction of a retrofit will likely be significantly longer than suggested by the Viaduct Preservation Group.

The big November storm - how did we do?

The heavy snow storm that hit the Puget Sound region last week left many questioning how we prepared for and responded to changing weather conditions Monday, Nov. 27. We've received dozens of e-mails from citizens wanting an accounting for the conditions experienced on state highways in King County earlier this week.

One writer asked, "What can be done in the future (besides me driving in these conditions) to alleviate that kind of a chaotic driving experience?" [Read Secretary Doug MacDonald's comments](#) on our efforts in response then [provide your comments](#).

WSDOT completes earthquake safety work in Seattle and Shoreline

Seven [I-5 bridges in Seattle and Shoreline](#) are now better equipped to withstand earthquakes. Crews recently completed installing steel jackets on 22 bridge columns and extended abutments on several bridge piers. This seismic retrofit will reduce the risk of catastrophic bridge failure and protect drivers on I-5. The strengthened bridges include:

- 42nd Street reversible ramp to I-5 express lanes
- 45th Street southbound off ramp from I-5
- SR 522, I-5 express lanes reversible ramp (Lake City Way)
- SR 522 on ramp to southbound I-5
- 85th Street overpass
- 117th Street overpass
- 195th Street pedestrian overpass

WSDOT expects to complete final cleanup work in the next two weeks, including barrier removal, shoulder paving and landscaping.

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